

No. 779. AUGUST



24th, 1844.

Price
One Penny.



THE TOWN AND LAKE OF COMO.

More pleased, my foot the hidden margin roves
Of Como, bosom'd deep in chestnut groves,
To flat-roof'd towns, that touch the waters' bound,
Or lurk in woody sunless glens profound;
Or from the bending rocks obtrusive cling,
And on the whit'd wave their shadows fling;
While round the steepa the little pathway twines,
And silence loves its purple roof of vines.
The viewless lingerer hastes at evening sees,
From rock-hewn steps, a sail between the trees;
Or marks, mid opening cliffs, fair dark-eyed maids,
Tend the small harvest of their garden glades;
Or stops, the solemn mountain shades to view,
Stretch o'er the pictured mirror broad and blue,
Tracking the yellow sun from steep to steep,
As up the opposing hills with tortoise foot they creep.

WORDSWORTH.

THERE is, perhaps, scarcely a single individual so devoid of taste for the beauties of nature as not to be struck with rapture at the first view of the Lake of Como. The bright sunny cheerfulness of that resplendent lake, the richness of its surrounding scenery, consisting of hills covered with vines, chestnut, walnut, and almond trees; the enlivening effect of its numerous picturesque villages and delightful villas; the undulating line of its important city, with its marble cathedral, its towers, and other imposing edifices, spreading along the southern extremity of the lake, and shut in by fertile hills; all these, with the mild and balmy air of Como, fill the mind with exuberant feelings of delight.

Along the mirror of the flood
Shone palaces, with dome, and colonnade,
Before whose marble steps bright fountains play'd
'Mid trim parterres, and arbors quaintly shorn

VOL. XXV.

By artful toil, that here and there display'd

A Flora, graced with Amalthea's horn,
Pan, or a piping Faun, who glads the groves,
Or quiver'd Dians under gilt alcoves.

But,—lovelier far, fair Como! lovelier far
Thy solitudes, and th' untamed wantoning
Of the sweet woodbine, that, ne'er taught to cling,
Clasps the wild rose, and closely interweaves
Its ring of trailing twine
To deck the rustic porch, and wed the vine,
Where the green trellis of th' exuberant leaves
Shades off Italia's sun-beam. Lovelier far,
Where wild flowers wanton are,
And th' unseen violet beneath the tread,
Betrays its fragrant bed,
To wind along the margin of the lake,
Or in the coolness of the rocky cave,
With icy drops the fiery lip to slake,
And watch the flow and ebbing of the wave,
Where Pliny wont to muse; and, free from Rome,
Pomps, and gorged theatres, and vain parade
Of train'd disputes beneath the sophist's dome,
By other teacher taught, and better lore,
Where the coy spirit of the water stray'd,
Question'd the fount; or lone on Como's shore
Found Wisdom, making solitude a home,
Nature a book. Far lovelier to explore
The leafy labyrinths, o'er whose growth, on high
Tower'd the stone-pine, while streams that flow'd beneath,
Wound, musical, their many-sparkling wreath.—SOTHEBY.

The Lake of Como, the *Lacus Larius* of the ancients, is a noble expanse of water more than thirty

779

varies in length, and between two and three miles broad, divided into two branches, one of which leads to the city, the other, called the Lake of Lecco, discharging the Adda, and communicating by means of that river and its canals, with Milan. The great glory of Como and its lake will be regarded by the lovers of antiquity as consisting in the fact of the town having been the birth-place, and the shores of the lake the favourite residence, of the immortal Pliny. The affection with which he regarded the spot appears from several of his letters. Thus, he says to one of his correspondents, "How stands Comum, that favourite scene of yours and mine? What becomes of the pleasant villa, the vernal portico, the shady plane-tree walk, the crystal canal, so agreeably winding along its flowery banks, together with the charming lake below, which serves at once the purposes of use and beauty? What have you to tell me of the firm yet soft gestatio, the sunny bath, the public saloon, the private dining-room, and all the elegant apartments for repose, both at noon and night? Do these possess my friend, and divide this time with pleasing vicissitude? or do the affairs of the world, as usual, call him frequently from this agreeable retreat?"

Pliny delighted to adorn his native town, and to establish among his fellow-citizens institutions for the encouragement of learning. He thus notices his own attempts to form a university at Como:—

Being lately at Comum, the place of my nativity, a young lad, son to one of my neighbours, made me a visit. I asked him whether he studied rhetoric, and where? He told me he did, and at Mediolanum. And why not here? Because, said his father, who came with him, we have no professors. No! said I; surely it nearly concerns you, who are fathers, (and very opportunely, several of the company were,) that your sons should receive their education here rather than anywhere else. For where can they be placed more agreeably than in their own country, or instructed with more safety and less expense than at home, and under the eye of their parents? Upon what very easy terms might you, by a general contribution, procure proper masters, if you would only apply towards the raising a salary for them, the extraordinary expense you sustain for your sons' journeys, lodgings, and for whatever else you pay in consequence of their being educated at a distance from home, as pay you must, for every article of that kind. Though I have no children myself, yet I shall willingly contribute to a design so beneficial to my native country, which I consider as my child or my parent; and therefore I will advance the third part of any sum you shall think proper to raise for this purpose. I would take upon myself the whole expense, were I not apprehensive that my benefaction might be hereafter abused and perverted to private ends, which I have observed to be the case in several places where public foundations of this kind have been established. * * * You can undertake nothing that will be more advantageous to your children, nor more acceptable to your country. Your sons will by these means receive their education where they receive their birth, and be accustomed from their infancy to inhabit and affect their native soil.

The charms of Como's lake and scenery have so largely occupied the thoughts and pens of visitors in that neighbourhood, that the town and its objects of interest have seldom met with a due share of attention. In Pliny's time, Comum was a rich and flourishing city, adorned with temples, statues, porticoes, and pillared gates, and surrounded by large and splendid villas. Nor is the modern Como very inferior in these respects. The cathedral, in materials, magnitude, and perhaps in decoration, though not in style, is judged equal to the temple of Jupiter, and ten or fifteen other churches add to the important aspect of the city. The cathedral or Duomo of Como is reckoned as the third of the Gothic buildings of Italy, exhibiting the features of the Lombard-Gothic style "in full and solemn splendour." This building was the production of a long series of architects from 1396 until the last century. It is composed of white marble, and is of mixed architecture, as may be expected, from its diversity of builders during the period above named. The front is of light and elegant Gothic; the nave is supported by Gothic arches; the choir and

transepts are adorned with composite pillars; and a dome rises over the centre. This dome or cupola was completed about 1732 by Juvara; and though the architecture may be deemed fanciful and complex, yet it is considered to blend happily with the older portions.

The inhabitants of Como are proud of their magnificent Duomo, and it appears that the whole expense of its erection was defrayed by voluntary contributions. The elegant ornaments of the exterior of this edifice are thus described in Murray's *Handbook for Northern Italy*. "The pilasters and other portions of the façade are covered with most curious emblems, some few *masonic*, the greater part religious, interspersed with texts and inscriptions in a most beautiful Gothic letter, reminding you of Melrose, and the

"Scrolls that teach you to live and die."

Many of these bas-reliefs are types; *e.g.*, a fountain, a vine, a lily, a church upon a hill, all exceedingly curious, from the train of thought which they exhibit. Amongst the larger *basso-relievi*, the Adoration of the Magi, in the arch of the door, should be noticed; but the most remarkable ornaments of this front are the statues of the two Plinys, erected by the Comaschi of the sixteenth century to their "fellow-citizens." They are, as it were, enthroned under canopies worked in the most ornamental style by Rodario.

The other sides of the exterior are in a mixed style, approaching to that which in France is styled the 'renaissance,' but with more good sense and beauty; and enough of ornament to give great richness, without overloading the general outline. The lateral doorways, particularly that on the northern side, with fanciful columns, and angels bearing the instruments of the passion, are particularly elegant. Both these doorways are executed by Rodario. The arabesques, flowing, elegant, and light, interspersed with birds, animals, serpents, and children, are completely Raphaelesque. They appear rather moulded in wax than carved, so delicate, so tender, so *morbido* are they."

Of the other churches of Como, that of St. Giovanni is adorned by several pillars which are supposed to have belonged to a portico mentioned by Pliny, as erected by Fabatus, his wife's grandfather. The church of San Fidele is a remarkable and very ancient structure, considered to be of the era of the Lombard kings. Strange sculpture of dragons, serpents, and lions has been employed to deck the building, which on the exterior remains nearly unaltered, but within, has been considerably modernized. Three Colleges, and an equal number of public libraries, help to supply the means of education to the population of Como, amounting to nearly twenty thousand. Near the Duomo stands the town-hall, built of red and white marble in alternate layers. The lofty gateways of the city are also imposing specimens of the military architecture of the middle ages.

The city of Como was not only the undoubted birth-place of Pliny, (though Verona has disputed for the honour:) it was also the place of nativity of the astronomer Piazzi, the discoverer of the planets that revolve between the orbs of Mars and Jupiter, and of the celebrated Volta, the electrician, whose important discoveries bring honour to his name, and whose private life appears to have been also distinguished for uprightness and attention to religious duties.

One of the great attractions in the neighbourhood of Como is a delightful villa called Pliniana, so called from an intermittent fountain to be seen there, which was minutely described by the younger Pliny, and also because it is supposed that the villa itself occupies the site of one of Pliny's villas. Many villas were, in fact, possessed by Pliny in this beautiful neighbourhood; but he only describes two, neither of which exactly corresponds with the aspect of the present Pliniana. Mr. Eustace, in his *Classical Tour through Italy*, describes a visit to this celebrated villa and fountain, which are situated on the margin of the lake at the foot of a precipice, from which tumbles a cascade amid groves of beeches, poplars, chestnuts, and cypresses. Through

these a serpentine walk leads towards the villa, and reveals new beauties at every winding. In a small court at the back of the house, the famous fountain bursts forth, and passing through the under story falls into the lake. Pliny's description is inscribed in large characters in the hall, and is still supposed to give an accurate account of the phenomenon; but it is curious that the elder Pliny described the fountain as rising and decreasing every hour, while the younger spoke of the phenomenon as occurring thrice a day only. Mr. Eustace had the testimony of the inhabitants of the house that now, as in Pliny's time, it takes place usually thrice a day; "usually, because, in very stormy and tempestuous weather, the fountain is said to feel the influence of the disordered atmosphere, and to vary considerably in its motions." This latter circumstance has given rise to a conjectural explanation of this phenomenon, which is hazarded by the Abate Carlo Amoretti, and is as follows:—The west wind, which regularly blows upon the lake at twelve o'clock, or mid-day, begins at nine in the upper regions, or on the summits of the mountains; upon these summits, and particularly that which rises behind the Pliniana, there are several cavities that penetrate into the bowels of the mountain and communicate with certain internal reservoirs of water, the existence of which has been ascertained by various observations. Now, when the wind rushes down the cavities above mentioned, and reaches the water, it ruffles its surface, and carries its waves against the sides of the cavern, where, just above its ordinary level, there are little fissures or holes. The water raised by the impulse which it receives from the wind, rises to these fissures, and passing through them, trickles down through the crevices that communicate with the fountain below, and gradually fills it. In stormy weather the water is impelled with greater violence, and flows in greater quantities, till it is nearly exhausted, or at least, reduced too low to be raised again to the fissures. Hence, on such occasions, the fountain fills with rapidity first, and then dries up, or rather remains low, till the reservoir regains its usual level, and, impelled by the wind, begins to ebb again.

ON THE LANGUAGE OF UNEDUCATED PEOPLE.

II.

THE examples given in a former article will have been sufficient to prove that, while there is much in the language of uneducated people for which, notwithstanding the apparent inaccuracy of the expressions, we may find authority in our old writers, yet there is also much for which no such sanction can be pleaded, and which therefore must be attributed to the perversions and interpolations common amongst persons who have gone through the ordinary routine of learning to read without any exercise of the understanding therein. Their knowledge of words is chiefly derived from conversation with persons of their own class, equally liable with themselves to fall into errors of speech, and is little assisted by the remembrance of the lessons of former years. Those lessons were probably learned by rote, and if grammatical rules were given at all, they were perhaps such as the pupil could not comprehend, or apply to use. No wonder, then, that as we proceed to notice the *phrases* common among Londoners, and pretty general also in other parts of the country, we find more serious offences against correct language, than have yet come under our view. Yet as it happened that many of the errors in words might be defended by reference to the best writers of an earlier period, so it is the case with some of the phrases also.

The following are selected from Mr. Pegge's collection, in the work already alluded to; and as far as

desirable, his playful mode of defending the cockney dialect has been followed.

The first evil to be noticed is the use of redundant negatives, such as, "I don't know nothing about it." Without wishing by any means to perpetuate what is now felt to be an error, it is yet submitted that this is a luxuriance of no modern date among the cockneys, though it is not of their own manufacture. The educated man of the present day may consider one negative as good as a thousand, but our ancestors thought otherwise, and so do the humble classes of our own times. Taking the language of France for a moment as a model,—a Frenchman answers a question negatively as follows:—*"Je ne sais pas."* If it is right for him to use two negatives, why is the Englishman restricted in this matter? Why may he not say, "I don't know nothing about it?" The abundant use of negatives is esteemed an elegance in the French language, and the French are extremely tenacious on this point. But if a cluster of negatives is poured from the mouth of an Englishman, he is considered anything but elegant in his speech, as was proved in the case of the citizen whose inquiry, at a tavern, "Hant nobody seen nothing of never a hat no-where?" has been carried as matter of ridicule to every part of the kingdom. Yet, absurd as the speech of the citizen may appear, a superabundance of negatives, almost as great as his, may be found in official documents, and in the writings of ancient poets. In a proclamation of King Henry the Fifth, for the apprehension of Sir John Oldcastle, on account of his contumacious behaviour in not accepting the terms before tendered to him, are these words:—*"Be it knowne, as Sire John Oldcastell refuse, nor will not receave, nor sue to have none of the graces," &c.* The examples in the writings of Chaucer and of Shakspeare are too numerous for quotation: the two following must suffice. Thus Chaucer,

So lowly, ne so truly you serve
N'il none of hem as I.—*Troilus and Cressida.*

N'il means "will not." It is retained in the common expression, "will he, n'il he," implying whether he will or will not. One of the numerous instances of abundant negatives in Shakspeare occurs in the third act and fifth scene of *Romeo and Juliet*:

• • • A sudden day of joy,
That thou expect'st not, nor I look'd not for.

The use of even the double negative is now discarded, not to say anything of three or four negatives, which, after examples from the Saxon, used to be accumulated in one phrase some centuries ago. Early in the eighteenth century the double negative was evidently treated as a matter of derision, and was thus employed in the distich at the end of the epitaph of P. P., the parish clerk, printed in Pope's works:

Do all we can, Death is a man
Who never spareth none.

Thus we find that, with respect to the use of negatives, the customs of former days have been handed down, and constantly adhered to by the lower orders, in defiance of improved modes of speech; nor will it ever be otherwise, unless the education given to children teaches them to think of what they are saying, instead of repeating their lessons like so many parrots.

Another common error among the same class of persons is, the enlarging the comparatives and superlatives, and instead of saying, "worse, worst; less, least," &c., to say, "worser, worrest; lesser, leastest," &c.: but here, again, they have high authority on their side. Shakspeare, in *King Lear*, says,

Let thy worser spirit tempt me again.
And, again, in *King Henry the Sixth*,
Changed to a worser shape thou canst not be.
Dryden, as cited by Bishop Lowth, says, not, *but* *so* *as*
Than arms. And worst fakeman evades
Even this.

Shakspeare and Addison use "lesser" in the same way, and so do many of our best writers.

I think there's ne'er a man in Christendom
Can lesser hide his love or hate than he.

King Richard III.
Attend to what a lesser muse indites.—ADDISON.

The Londoners are accused of inflaming the offence by sometimes saying "more worser," &c. It must be confessed that this is highly unnecessary, yet in Shakspeare's days there was no objection to it. In the *Tempest* it occurs thus,

Not that I am more better
Than Prospero.

And in *Henry the Fifth* there are two instances,
Ne'er from France arrived more happier men.

Act IV, sc. ult.
None sharper than your swords.—Act III, sc. 5.

But the love of augmentation does not stop here: our citizens must also plead guilty to the charge of using double superlatives; such as, "most impudentest, most ignorantest, most particularest, most agreeablest," &c. But have we not an example of double superlatives in the *Psalms*, in the expression, "Most Highest," allowed to be one of great force, and properly applicable to the Almighty. If it be said that this is a magnificent Eastern idiom, it may nevertheless be replied, that in later times St. Paul's expression was such as our translators could only do justice to by a double superlative, when he said, "After the most straitest sect of our religion, I lived a Pharisee." In profane authoress there are also many instances of the use of the double superlative. Sir Thomas More used the expression, "most basest;" Ben Jonson that of, "most ancientest;" John Lilly (of the time of Queen Elizabeth) that of, "most brightest;" and Shakspeare, "most boldest, most unkindest, most heaviest;" also in *Hamlet* the beautiful example,

But that I love thee best,
O most best, believe it.

The fact is that these are all Saxonisms, the modern prefix "most" being used instead of the ancient *alder* (older, or greater,) which the Saxons used for the same purpose of enhancing their superlatives. "Alderliest Sovereign" is used by Shakspeare in *Henry the Sixth*, while the strange and contradictory terms "alder-first," and "alder-last," are used by Chaucer. Dr. Skinner gives us "alder-best," which agrees with Shakspeare's "most best." This word "alder-best" is exemplified in Latin, in the University term *Senior Optime*, which signifies *elder-best* of the graduates of the year. The word *Junior Optime*, (literally *younger-best*) is given as a relative term; but not after Saxon authority.

But however legitimate in Saxon times, expressions of this nature are now decidedly incorrect, and adherence to them is only to be pardoned in persons who have not had the advantage of education. In like manner the use of "knowed" for "knew" and "known," and of "seed" for "saw" and "seen" may have much said in its defence, but is not reconcileable with modern usage. If a husbandman were to say to a cockney, "I sowed all my crops last week;" the answer would probably be "I knowed you would." It is not likely that "knowed" should be discarded as erroneous, while "sowed" is retained as correct. The irregularity of our language is the cause of many of these errors, and its variableness is the cause of more. In the time of the translation of the New Testament, "crew" was the preterite of "crow" — ("the cock crew"); but in our days the word "crew" has become obsolete, and "crowed" is allowed to be the proper word. "The received termination of such preterites as 'knew,'" says Mr. Pegge, "affords a pregnant example of the inconsistency of the English language. Verbs ending in *ow* have for the most part adopted the termination *ew* in the perfect tense; as *blow, blew, grow, grew*, &c.; while at the same time we have verbs totally

different, and incongruous in their infinitives; as from *slay* we meet with *slew*; from *fly*, *flew*, and perhaps a few others: while *flow* is obliged to be content with the regular preterite *flowed*, for we have never, I believe, heard of a river that *flowed*."

"Known" is also used as a participle passive, as "I've knowed him for years;" and others, both preterites and participles passive, are formed on the same model, as "his horse throwed him;" "the bill was throwed out of the House of Commons;" "he was drawed in to pay a sum of money;" "he drawed upon his banker;" "since he growed rich, he has growed proud," &c. Bishop Lowth says that we have preserved one passive participle, "known," from the irregular Saxon "know-en;" as likewise "thrown" and "drawn," from "thrown" and "drawen;" but while the cockney is used to such participles as "flowed, sowed, mowed," &c., he naturally forms others like them. On the same principle, "seed" passes current for "saw," and also for "seen." The latter is a contraction of the Saxon "see-en," condemned by Bishop Lowth, and stigmatized by all Saxon grammarians as anomalous, the natural termination of such participle being either in *ed* or *od*.

"Mought" is used for "might;" but this cannot be considered incorrect, since it was in common use in Chaucer's time, as was "mowe" instead of "may." In Fairfax's *Tasso*, translated at the close of Queen Elizabeth's reign, we find a similar word used:

Within the postern stood Argante stout,
To rescue her, if ill mote her betide.

A true born Londoner, according to Mr. Pegge, always *axes* questions, *axes* pardon, *axes* leave, &c. This word *ax* for *ask* is common among the lower orders throughout the kingdom; but though it now sounds barbarous enough, it has nevertheless descended from our forefathers, whose writings show the constant use of the word. Chaucer uses the verb "axe," and the noun "an axing." Margaret, Countess of Richmond and Derby, in a letter to her son, Henry the Seventh, concludes with "As herty blessings as y can axe of God." In the next reign, Dr. Clerk writing to Wolsey, says, "The king axed after your grace's welfare." In Chaucer's time, and subsequently, numbers of common words were written differently to the form in which we now see them: thus "briddes," for "birds;" "brunt," for "burnt;" "brun," for "burn;" "forst," for "frost;" "brest," for "burst," &c.; and we may still discover in the common dialect of the country vestiges of the ancient pronunciation. Londoners of the lower class frequently complain of being "thrusty," instead of "thirsty." The confusion of the participle passive with the active preterite is an error, almost universal with the above class. They say "I have took (not 'taken') the parcel;" "he has fell (not 'fallen') down;" "she has wrote (not 'written') the letter." The only excuse for this is to say as before, that this is the old mode of speaking and writing, as will appear from the following instances.

"The sun has rose." SWIFT. "Have rose." PRIOR. "Have arose." DRYDEN. "Had not arose." BOLINGBROKE. "Are arose." *Comedy of Errors*. "Sure some disaster has befel." GAY. "He should have fell." PRIOR. "Wrote," for written, is used by Milton, Dryden, Clarendon, Prior, Swift, Bolingbroke, Bentley, Atterbury, and Addison, besides Shakspeare. Bishop Lowth says that the confusion of the past tense active, and the participle passive "prevails greatly in common discourse, and is too much authorized by our best writers." To exemplify the force of habit, he adds, "we easily forgive such expressions as 'I have wrote, and 'I have bore;' while we should be startled at 'I have knew,' or 'I have saw;' though in fact they are equally barbarous."

There is a term very common in London, and now confined to the uneducated, which in the time of Milton

and of Shakspeare was not considered an indication of vulgarity. Cockneys are very fond of inviting each other to "fetch a walk;" and when describing a walk that is passed, they say "we faught a walk." This has a very dissonant sound with it, for most persons would as soon think of carrying, as of fetching, a walk; as for "faught," it is a curious deduction from "fetch;" but it follows the rule of caught from catch, and taught from teach, and we must not therefore be too strict in judging it. Now Shakspeare, in *Cymbeline*, makes even the queen say,

I'll fetch a turn about the garden, pitying
The pangs of barr'd affections.

Milton has adopted a similar expression in his *Arcades*:

When evening grey doth rise, I fetch my round
Over the mount, and all this hallowed ground.

At the commencement of the eighteenth century, however, this expression seems to have been considered vulgar, for Congreve puts it in the mouth of one of his characters in the play called the *Way of the World*, evidently intending thereby to make the speaker betray his low origin. "If that how you were disposed to fetch a walk this evening, I would have faught a walk with you." The term "faught" is entirely confined to a walk, for if anything portable is fetched, the cockney says "I fetch it," in the same way that he would say "I catch cold," instead of "I caught cold."

The substitution of "learn" for "teach" is another popular error. "Who learns you to play upon the music, Miss?" is no uncommon inquiry in some of the classes to which the piano has now unfortunately descended. But even here antiquity sanctions what modern linguists disallow. The Anglo-Saxon verb "laeran," modified into "learn," had indiscriminately both senses, and implied *docere* (to teach), as well as *discere* (to learn). Chaucer uses the word "lerne" in the sense of "teach;" and Shakspeare evidently considered them as words of equal import. Thus, in "As you like it," he says, "Unless you could teach me to forget a banished father, you must not learn me any extraordinary pleasure." And again in the *Tempest*, "You taught me language: the red plague rid you for learning me your speech." The translators of the *Psalms* doubtless employed the best English of the days in which they wrote, and there we find "learn" repeatedly used for "teach." "Remember," in the sense of "remind," is equally common among Londoners and country people: thus we have the common phrase, "Will you remember me of it?" Shakspeare employs this repeatedly, and Dr. Johnson brings forward the following instances:—In *Henry IV.*, Worcester says

I must remember you, my lord,
We were the first and dearest of your friends.

In *King John*, Act III., Scene 4.

CONST. Grief fills the room up of my absent child,
. lies in his bed,
Remembers me of all his gracious parts.

In *Richard II.*, Act III., Scene 4.

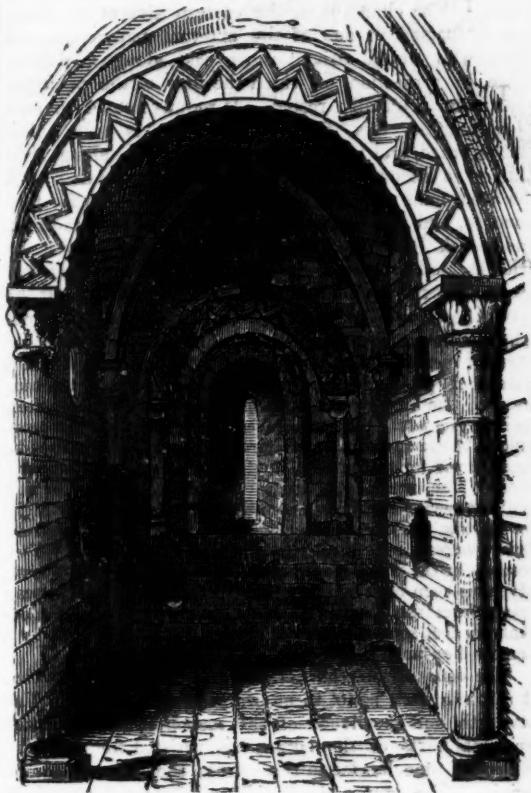
QUEEN. It doth remember me the more of sorrow.

We found many humming-birds at Port San Antonio, which we attributed to the sheltered situation of the place, and the luxuriant growth of fuchsias and other plants, upon the sweets of whose flowers they feed. Here, however, one of the same species was seen sporting about in a most exposed place, and during the fall of a snow-shower, a proof of the hardy character of this little bird, which, if it does migrate upon the approach of winter to a warmer clime, lingers, at least, as long as it possibly can. This was the middle of April; the winter had, in fact, already commenced, and all the mountains around us were clothed with snow, while the ground was also coated with the same dazzling covering.—*Voyages of the Adventure and Beagle*.

W. D. B. 1844.

not fit to emit ed. ——————

ATHELSTANE'S CHAPEL, CONISBOROUGH CASTLE.



THE interesting chapel above represented forms a portion of the keep of Conisborough Castle, Yorkshire, and is often allowed to remain unvisited on account of the personal risk attending an ascent to it. The castle itself has already been briefly described in these pages*, and if we turn to the third volume of Ivanhoe, we shall find the pen of Sir Walter Scott employed in depicting the appearance of the castle, and the neighbouring scenery. "There are few more beautiful or striking scenes in England," says the great novelist, "than are presented by the vicinity of this Saxon fortress. The soft and gentle river Don sweeps through an amphitheatre, in which cultivation is richly blended with woodland, and on a mount, ascending from the river, well defended by walls and ditches, rises this ancient edifice, which, as its Saxon name implies, was, previous to the Conquest, a royal residence of the kings of England. The outer walls have probably been added by the Normans, but the inner keep bears tokens of very great antiquity. It is situated on a mount at one angle of the inner court, and forms a complete circle of perhaps twenty-five feet in diameter. The wall is of immense thickness, and is propped or defended by six huge external buttresses, which project from the circle and rise up against the sides of the tower to strengthen or to support it. These massive buttresses are hollowed out towards the top, and terminate in a sort of turrets commanding with the interior of the keep itself. The distant appearance of this huge building, with these singular accompaniments, is as interesting to the lovers of the picturesque as the interior of the castle is to the eager antiquary, whose imagination it carries back to the days of the Heptarchy."

In order to reach Athelstane's chapel, the visitor must enter the great tower by a mode which partakes of the rude simplicity of early times, and is also described in the work above referred to. A flight of deep, narrow, and almost precipitous steps, leads up to a small portal in the south side of the tower, by which the adventurous antiquary may gain access to a small stair, within the thickness of the main wall of the tower, which leads up to a third story of the building, the two

* See Saturday Magazine, Vol. V., p. 45.

lower being dungeons or vaults, which neither receive air nor light, save by a square opening in the third story, with which they seem to have communicated by a ladder. The chapel is on the eastern side of the keep, and is formed in one of the external buttresses, and those who would visit it must pass along a narrow ledge, or projection, on which the floor of the principal apartment originally rested. It requires steady nerves to accomplish this, for the projection is only a few inches broad, and the person who ventures along it is obliged to secure himself from falling by means of a few iron nails or cramps driven into the wall for that purpose, and these failing he may topple down headlong, and break his neck. Such is the account given by Rhodes, in his *Yorkshire Scenery*, and confessing that he had not the hardihood to visit the chapel himself, he gives the description and drawing furnished by a friend. The former is as follows:—"In addition to a little room over the entrance, on a level with the highest floor, there is a small chapel, inclosed, like the stairs, in one of the buttresses. Its form is six-sided, its length about fifteen feet, and its greatest width not exceeding nine: a narrow loop-hole at the end, and a small circular opening on each side, have served for the admission of light into this little apartment. The ornamented arches supporting the roof, which is about twelve feet high, intersect each other at their highest points. They spring from pillars, whose capitals, richly carved, bear some resemblance to the Ionic. Two recesses in the wall, about a yard from the floor, may possibly have been used for holy water. On the left, a doorway opens from the chapel to an adjoining oratory, not more than six feet square, which is lighted, like the chapel, by a narrow loop-hole."

The date of this chapel, and of the edifice of which it forms a part, is not to be precisely ascertained. The strength and excellence of the masonry, which in the principal parts of the edifice has resisted for ages the effects of time, has led to the opinion that it is of Roman origin. The stones are "well tooled upon the surface, and the cement by which they are united, is even now as firm and compact as the stone itself," but so essentially does the structure differ from all others in the kingdom which are understood to be of Roman architecture, that considerable doubts exist on this point. Neither does the style of Conisborough agree with that of any Saxon or Norman edifice in this kingdom. In this uncertainty, Mr. King, in his *Munimenta Antiqua*, advances a theory, which supposes this fortress to have been erected as early as the middle of the first century, by Cartimandua, Queen of the Brigantes, who is supposed to have had her chief residence at Aldborough, in Yorkshire, which at that time was a royal city. He is of opinion that this place was not built during the presence of the Romans in this country; but if not so early as the time of the Queen of the Brigantes, certainly not later than the commencement of the fifth century, and immediately after the departure of the armies of the Cæsars. Whatever may have been the precise time of the erection of this castle, it seems generally admitted by all who have visited the spot, that it must have been at one of the most barbarous periods in the history of this country. That part of the building intended for a prison forms the most dismal of dungeons. "No place," says Mr. Rhodes, "can possibly be more appalling to look down into than this odious pit. The blood curdles, and the heart grows cold at the idea of human creatures having been thrust into such a vile cell, and incarcerated in a place fit only for the abode of toads and vipers. The apartment immediately above was probably a guard room, which, when closed, excluded both light and air from the wretched sufferers." Of the more habitable parts of the castle the same writer remarks, "If it ever were a residence of the princes and nobles of the land, it abundantly shows that their comforts might be restricted within a very narrow compass, and that, notwithstanding their elevated rank, they were accustomed to the dangers and privations incident to a state of trouble and warfare, the places in which they resided being evidently constructed more for security than convenience."

The architecture of the chapel differs from that of the other parts of the edifice, but it is looked upon as merely an appropriate deviation from the castellate to the ecclesiastical style, and the general feeling on entering it is that it was undoubtedly constructed for religious purposes, and with a Christian prepossession. The following passages from *Ivanhoe* refer to this chapel, in the buttress, with its adjoining oratory. Sir Walter Scott made this castle the residence of his Saxon chieftain Athelstane.

Cedric arose, and extending his hand to Richard, conducted him into a small and very rude chapel, which was excavated, as it were, out of one of the external buttresses. As there was no opening, saving a very narrow loop-hole, the place would have been nearly quite dark but for two flambeaux or torches, which showed by a red and smoky light, the arched roof and naked walls, the rude altar of stone, and the crucifix of the same material. Before this altar was placed a bier, and on each side of this bier kneeled three priests, who told their beads and muttered their prayers with the greatest signs of external devotion. This act of pious charity performed, Cedric again motioned them to follow him, gliding over the stone floor with a noiseless tread; and, after ascending a few steps, opened, with great caution, the door of a small oratory which adjoined to the chapel. It was about eight feet square, hollowed, like the chapel itself, out of the thickness of the wall; and the loop-hole, which enlightened it, being to the west, and widening considerably as it sloped inward, a beam of the setting sun found its way into its dark recess, and showed a female of a dignified mien, and whose countenance retained the marked remains of majestic beauty. Her long flowing robes, and her flowing wimple of black cypress, enhanced the whiteness of her skin, and the beauty of her light-coloured and flowing tresses, which time had neither thinned nor mingled with silver. Her countenance expressed the deepest sorrow that is constant with resignation. On the stone table before her stood a crucifix of ivory, beside which was laid a missal, having its pages richly illuminated, and its boards adorned with clasps of gold, and bosses of the same precious metal.

THE PLACE OF REST.

THERE is an hour of peaceful rest,
To mourning wanderers given;
There is a tear for souls distrest,
A balm for every wounded breast—
'Tis found above—in heaven!
There is a soft, a downy bed,
'Tis fair as breath of even;
A couch for weary mortals spread,
Where they may rest their aching head,
And find repose in heaven!
There is a home for weeping souls,
By sin and sorrow driven,
When toss'd on life's tempestuous shoals,
Where storms arise, and ocean rolls,
And all is drear—but heaven!
There Faith lifts up the tearful eye,
The heart with anguish riven;
And views the tempest passing by,
The evening shadows quickly fly,
And all serene in heaven!
There fragrant flowers immortal bloom,
And joys supreme are given:
There rays divine disperse the gloom;
Beyond the confines of the tomb
Appears the dawn of heaven!—ANON.

It is indisputable that the great movements which stir society from its very foundations, are invariably produced by the workings of the living spirit of man. The sense of moral and intellectual want, which disposes men to seize on new opinions, often lies for centuries fermenting in the fathomless depths of the heart of society. At length, in the fulness of time, arises one of those master-spirits, endowed with the genius, energy, and confidence which fit a man to wield these moral forces; to reveal to his age the wants of which it had but a dim and perplexed consciousness; to interpret to it its own confused and half-formed opinions, and to give them shape, compactness, and strength.—RANKE.

RECENT INTELLIGENCE RESPECTING THE
ABORINGES OF KING GEORGE'S SOUND.
WESTERN AUSTRALIA.

III.

IN concluding the history of the natives of King George's Sound we present the reader with a few particulars not noticed by Governor Phillips.

The dress of the natives consists of a cloak of kangaroo skin, reaching nearly to the knee; it is worn as a mantle over the shoulders, and is fastened with a rush, by which the right arm is left free and disengaged. They are seldom seen without their cloaks, which in rainy weather are worn with the fur outwards; some of them, however, are so scanty that the wearer may be considered almost in a state of nudity, particularly the children, whose cloaks are mere strips of skin. The larger skins procured from the male kangaroos, are appropriated to the women.

The mode of preparing the mantles is as follows: the skins are pegged out upon the ground to dry, and are then cut into the proper shape with a sharpened stone; with the same instrument the inner surface is scraped away until the skin becomes soft and pliable; it is afterwards rubbed over with grease and a sort of red ochreous earth, which they also use to paint the body. The skins thus prepared are stitched together with the sinews of the animal, which are drawn from the tail. The other articles of dress are the *noodle-bul*, or waist-band, armlets, and head-dress. The *noodle-bul* is a long yarn of worsted, spun from the fur of the opossum, wound round the waist several hundred times. A similar band is also worn occasionally round the left arm and the head.

Contrary to the usual order of things, the females neglect these ornaments, while the single men make a great display, decking their heads with feathers, dog-tails, and other similar articles, and sometimes having the hair long, and bound round the head. The women keep their hair quite short, and do not wear either the *noodle-bul* or ornaments; young girls sometimes have a fillet of worsted yarn, called *woortil*, round the neck. Both sexes smear their faces and bodies with red pigment (*paloil*), mixed with grease, which gives them a disagreeable odour. They do this, as they say, for the purpose of keeping themselves clean, and as a defence from the sun and rain. Their hair is frequently matted with the same pigment. When fresh painted, they are all over of a brickdust colour, which gives them a most singular appearance. By way of mourning the men paint a white streak across the forehead and down the cheek bones, and the women put on the white colour in large blotches. Painting the body is used simply as an ornament, and for the purposes aforesaid; and not, as in New South Wales, as a sign of war.

The natives of King George's Sound have the same custom as at Sydney of cutting gashes on their body, and raising an elevated cicatrix. It is done chiefly on the shoulders and chest, and is considered an honourable distinction, as well as a characteristic of particular tribes. Every individual when travelling, carries a fire-stick for the purpose of kindling fires, and in winter the practice of carrying one under the cloak, for the sake of heat, is almost universal. This fire-stick is generally a cone of *Banksia grandis*, or of some other wood which has the property of remaining ignited for a considerable time. The weapons used by these people are spears of two or three kinds, and are propelled by a throwing stick (*meara*). The spears are made of a long slender stick, about the thickness of the finger, but heavy and tough. They are scraped down to a very fine point, and are hardened and straightened by the assistance of fire. Hunting and fishing spears are barbed with a piece of wood, fastened on very neatly and firmly with kangaroo sinew, and the ligature covered with gum ob-

tained from the grass tree. They are about eight feet long. The war spears are longer and heavier, and are armed, for five or six inches from the point, with pieces of sharp stones fixed in gum, resembling the teeth of a saw, the stones increasing in size from the point. Each man carries from two to five spears. The throwing stick is about two feet long, and four inches wide, narrowing at each extremity. At the handle is fixed a piece of gum, in which is inserted a sharp-edged stone, which is used to scrape the point of the spear when blunted by use. At the outer end is a small wooden peg, which is inserted into a hole at the end of the spear, and by which it is propelled. This throwing stick is also used in close fights. A short stick called *torok* is also used for throwing at and striking small animals. Their hammer is made with a lump of gum having two stones imbedded in it, stuck on to the extremity of a short stick; their knife is a stick with sharp-edged stones, fixed in a bed of gum at the end, and for two or three inches down the side, forming a serrated instrument.

The huts formed by this people consist merely of a few small sticks stuck in the ground, and bent over in the form of a bower, about four feet high, and five or six wide. Sometimes two are united. These huts are slightly thatched with the leaves of the grass tree, or in rainy weather roofed with pieces of bark, upon which stones are placed to prevent their being blown away; but which afford miserable protection from the weather. They are generally erected in a sheltered spot near water, with the back towards the prevailing wind, and a fire kept constantly burning in front. One of the huts contains several individuals, who lie covered in their mantles, huddled together in a crowded state: the dogs are also admitted to a share of their bed. An encampment sometimes consists of seven or eight of these huts, at other times of only two or three. The huts are so arranged as not to overlook each other: the single men have one to themselves; the children sleep with the women in a large hut near the husband's. The dwellers in the same encampment are generally near relations. The natives who live together have the exclusive right of fishing or hunting upon the neighbouring grounds, which are, in fact, individual properties, the quantity of land owned by each individual being very considerable; yet others of his family have certain rights over it, so that it may be considered as partly belonging to the tribe. But these people are seldom stationary long together; they move from place to place to procure the articles of provision which may be in season. It is in summer that these people procure their game in the greatest abundance, and this they do by setting fire to the sides of the cover in which the game is inclosed, by means of a torch made of the leaves of the grass tree. The hunters concealed by the smoke, stand in the paths most frequented by the animals, and easily spear them as they pass by. Vast numbers of animals are thus destroyed, and the violence of the fire sometimes extends for miles, though this is generally guarded against by burning it in consecutive portions. When the game has thus been secured, and the fire has passed over the ground, the natives walk over the ashes in search of lizards and snakes. The hunters are much assisted by their dogs, which they take when young, and domesticate, but they take little pains to train them to any particular mode of hunting. These dogs have a very fine scent, and draw upon their game like the pointer, after which they spring upon or chase it. The owner of a dog is entitled to an extra proportion of the game killed. The dogs themselves are not very well kept. Their food consists of vegetables, roots roasted and pounded, the entrails of animals, and such bones as are too hard for the teeth of the natives. Sometimes the dog is so ill-fed that he is obliged to leave his master and provide for himself; but

in the course of a few days he generally returns to his owner again. When the owner does not wish to be followed by his dog, he ties the fore-leg of the latter to the neck with a band of rushes, and leaves the animal in a shady place. Sometimes he carries his dog on his shoulders. These dogs seldom bark, but bite very sharply, snapping like a fox. They are excellent watch-dogs, and will attack strangers. In the wild state they are sometimes killed and eaten by the natives, but no use is made of their skins.

The following mode is followed in hunting the kangaroo: the natives assemble in small parties at a time when the rain is pouring heavily, or the wind blowing hard, to prevent the noise of their approach from being heard, for the kangaroo is very quick of hearing, and always on the alert. The hunter creeps upon them with the greatest caution, and generally succeeds in approaching them unobserved. They always, if possible, keep the wind in their face, and when one is observed, they take off their cloak, and watching when the animal stops or turns his back on them, they hastily advance, keeping a bush between them for concealment. As they approach their prey, they move very lightly in a stooping posture, and only at a time when the noise of the wind prevents their footsteps from being heard. Should the kangaroo turn round and observe them, they instantly stop and remain perfectly motionless until he resume his feeding. In this way they get within a few yards of their prize, and then pierce him with their spears. The instant he falls they run up and dispatch him with their hammers by blows on the head. The first operation is to extract the two front teeth of the lower jaw, which they use to sharpen the spear points; then they seize the tail, and taking the end in the mouth, bite off the tip, and, by pulling, extract the sinews which are inserted in it; these are bound round a stick and dried for use, either for the purpose of stitching the mantles, or tying the barbs on the spears. When the hunters are numerous, they completely surround the game, and advance from all quarters until they get within a spear's throw of it.

The emu, as well as the kangaroo, affords a favourite article of diet; and at some seasons, lizards form a considerable portion of the food. The eggs and young of birds, principally of the parrot tribe, but also of hawks, ducks, swans, pigeons, &c., are eagerly sought after in the spring of the year. The fishing exploits of the natives have been already alluded to. Fish being very plentiful, they often kill more than is wanted for immediate use. In this case they roast the fish, and, separating the flesh in large flakes from the bones, they pack it carefully up in soft bark, in which way it will keep good for several days. Oysters and other shell-fish are to be obtained in large quantities; but the natives never made any use of them previous to the formation of the colony. They have now learned to esteem them as excellent food. Women are employed in the procuring as well as the preparation of much of their food. Also in preparing the clothing, building the huts, and similar offices. They possess few utensils, and these are of the rudest construction. A piece of soft bark, tied at each end, serves for a drinking-cup; the claw of a kangaroo is used for a needle; and through a hollow rush, or the wing-bone of a bird, they suck the water, when it cannot conveniently be reached with their mouths. Although the women are thus useful to their husbands, they do not always receive kind treatment. The men are very fond of their children, and seldom chastise them; but many of the women have spear-wounds in the legs or thighs, inflicted by their husbands. The general practice of polygamy is a fruitful source of quarrels. The husband is very jealous of his wives, (who sometimes give him reason to be so,) and if he finds any excuse for his suspicions, he punishes them very severely. A young woman sometimes runs away from an aged husband, to whom she has been assigned; but

he generally recovers her, and punishes her either with a severe beating, or more frequently by spearing her through the thigh. When a man dies, his wives remain for the period of mourning with their fathers' tribe. The wives generally descend to the nearest relatives of the husband as their undoubted property; but were they to go and live with their new owners, immediately on the death of the husband, it would be considered as a shameful act, and would meet with severe punishment. Thus a sense of propriety and decorum is to be found among this untutored race. The women are extremely hardy. On the birth of a child the mother goes out the next day as usual to seek food. In cases of twins, one of the children is immediately killed, (if of different sexes, the female is preserved,) because, they say, a woman has not sufficient milk for two children, neither can she carry them both, while seeking her food. As soon as the little ones can walk, they are placed under the care of a girl nine or ten years old, who takes them out, each provided with a little stick, to grope for roots in the neighbourhood of the encampment. If a stranger comes in sight, the little ones hide among the grass, lying as close as a hare in its form. Thus the women are left at liberty to carry on their laborious occupations, assisted perhaps by the elder children.

The funeral solemnities of these people are accompanied by loud lamentations. A grave is dug about four feet long, three wide, and three deep. The earth that is removed is arranged on one side of the grave, in the form of a crescent; at the bottom is placed some bark, and then small green boughs, and upon this the body, ornamented and enveloped in its cloak, with the knees bent up to the breast, and the arms crossed. Over the body is heaped more green boughs, and bark, and the hole is then filled with earth; green boughs are again spread, and upon them are deposited the spears, knife, and hammer of the deceased, together with the ornaments that belonged to him; his throwing stick on one side, and the curl or torok on the other side of the mound. When a female is interred, her implements are in like manner deposited in the grave. The mourners then carve circles in the bark of the trees that grow near the grave, at the height of six or seven feet from the ground, and make a small fire in front of the grave. They then gather small boughs, and use them in carefully brushing away every particle of the earth of the grave which may adhere, to their own persons. It frequently happens that two individuals bear the same name, and in this case, should one of them die, the other changes his name for a certain period, in order that the name of the deceased should not be uttered. Immediately after a burial, the encampment is broken up, and the people quit the neighbourhood, never once allowing the name of the deceased to pass their lips. If relating the occurrence, the names of the survivors are alone mentioned, and by the omission of the name of the deceased, his fate is told. When asked the reason of this silence, they said it was not good to speak of his name, lest they should see his *gnouï*, or ghost.

There is no doubt but that these people have some idea of a future state. Mr. Nind says that they have adopted an idea of late that they shall go to the moon after death; but this does not appear to have been their prior opinion, for when asked where their fathers had gone, they pointed westward. It is melancholy to think, that if their intercourse with our countrymen will increase their knowledge of good, it will also add to their temptations to evil. Mr. Nind says, "They once saw some of our people in a state of inebriety,—one of them quite unable to stand; upon which they came to me in great alarm, under strong apprehension that he would certainly die before the following day: adding, that black men were sometimes taken so, and died. I endeavoured to ascertain the nature of the disease, and think they must have meant a *coup de soleil*."